

POLICY #3700

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Surrey Board of Education recognizes the importance of the natural environment in building a healthy and sustainable future. The board acknowledges its responsibility to conduct its affairs in an environmentally responsible manner and to protect the natural ecosystems that we impact.

The board has a critical role to play as stewards of public education, as educators of future citizens and as active partners in the search for sustainability solutions. The board aims to develop effective environmental practices and will encourage sustainable behaviours by educating students and providing opportunities for staff to develop ecological literacy.

Implementation of this policy shall be the joint responsibility of the board, students and staff in collaboration with parents and our community; each has a role to play in our effort to build a healthier and more sustainable education system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The board is committed to ensuring that sustainability is a core element in our school system, and to including sustainability as a key factor in our strategies, plans, business practices, decisions and operations. The following Guiding Principles will guide our decision making:

1. Stewardship of the Environment
Encourage shared responsibility as a steward of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.
2. Valuing of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)
Support traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) which draws connections between the land and traditional Aboriginal ways of being. Aboriginal peoples have traditionally been inextricably connected to the land. They have a history of sustainable practices and understanding the interrelationship with species and their surrounding environment.
3. Education & Learning
Recognize that the integration of environmental education into teaching and learning, as well as into decision making, is the primary means to a cohesive district culture of conservation.

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Provide opportunities for students to learn about the natural world, the impact that human activity has on ecosystems, and ways in which that impact can be mitigated to enhance and restore the environment.

Provide professional development opportunities for staff to enhance eco-literacy.

4. Integration of Environmental and Fiscal Decisions

Operational and procurement decisions should give consideration to economic, educational and environmental impacts.

5. Continuous Improvement

Recognize that leading environmental practices are continuously evolving. Continue to evolve our approach to environmental sustainability as more is understood about the complex and interconnected challenges that building a sustainable future presents.

6. Efficient Use of Resources

To the extent practical, reduce the district's carbon footprint and support the use of environmentally beneficial products and services, taking into account the composition, durability and life cycle impact of products.

Where practical, use renewable resources or select resources that extend the life of nonrenewable resources.

Minimize waste by first, endeavoring to eliminate or reduce the amount generated; second, striving to utilize recycling opportunities; and third, disposing of remaining waste in an environmentally sound manner.

7. Innovation

Implement structures, strategies, practices and technologies that will maximize the efficient use of resources and improve sustainable practices.

8. Collaboration

Build partnerships within the community and collaborate with organizations that have complimentary objectives.

Look for best practices from other jurisdictions and school districts. Seek and support innovative solutions to our sustainability challenges.

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